

Assembly Bill No. 2537

CHAPTER 678

An act to amend Section 1720.4 of the Labor Code, relating to public works, and making an appropriation therefor.

[Approved by Governor September 30, 2008. Filed with
Secretary of State September 30, 2008.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2537, Furutani. Public works: volunteers.

Existing law defines "public works," for purposes of regulating public works contracts, as, among other things, construction, alteration, demolition, installation, or repair work that is performed under contract and paid for in whole or in part out of public funds. Pursuant to existing law, all workers employed on public works shall be paid not less than the general prevailing rate of per diem wages for work, except for public works projects of \$1,000 or less, or except for any work performed, on or after January 1, 2002, and until January 1, 2009, by a volunteer, a volunteer coordinator, or by members of the California Conservation Corps or of certified Community Conservation Corps, as defined.

This bill would extend, until January 1, 2012, the exclusion from the application of the law governing "public works," any work performed by a volunteer, a volunteer coordinator, or by members of the California Conservation Corps or of certified Community Conservation Corps, as defined.

This bill would require the Director of Industrial Relations to submit a written report containing information regarding volunteers on public works projects, as specified, to the Legislature by January 1, 2011. The costs incurred in the preparation of this report would be funded by moneys in the Environmental License Plate Fund. By authorizing the expenditure of moneys from this fund, the bill would make an appropriation.

This bill also would state legislative findings and declarations regarding the intent of the bill.

Appropriation: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 1720.4 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

1720.4. (a) This chapter shall not apply to any of the following work:

(1) Any work performed by a volunteer. For purposes of this section, "volunteer" means an individual who performs work for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons for a public agency or corporation qualified under

Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as a tax-exempt organization, without promise, expectation, or receipt of any compensation for work performed.

(A) An individual shall be considered a volunteer only when his or her services are offered freely and without pressure and coercion, direct or implied, from an employer.

(B) An individual may receive reasonable meals, lodging, transportation, and incidental expenses or nominal nonmonetary awards without losing volunteer status if, in the entire context of the situation, those benefits and payments are not a substitute form of compensation for work performed.

(C) An individual shall not be considered a volunteer if the person is otherwise employed for compensation at any time (i) in the construction, alteration, demolition, installation, repair, or maintenance work on the same project, or (ii) by a contractor, other than a corporation qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as a tax-exempt organization, that is receiving payment to perform construction, alteration, demolition, installation, repair, or maintenance work on the same project.

(2) Any work performed by a volunteer coordinator. For purposes of this section, “volunteer coordinator” means an individual paid by a corporation qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as a tax-exempt organization, to oversee or supervise volunteers. An individual may be considered a volunteer coordinator even if the individual performs some nonsupervisory work on a project alongside the volunteers, so long as the individual’s primary responsibility on the project is to oversee or supervise the volunteers rather than to perform nonsupervisory work.

(3) Any work performed by members of the California Conservation Corps or of Community Conservation Corps certified by the California Conservation Corps pursuant to Section 14507.5 of the Public Resources Code.

(b) This section shall apply retroactively to otherwise covered work concluded on or after January 1, 2002, to the extent permitted by law.

(c) On or before January 1, 2011, the director shall submit a written report to the Legislature that does both of the following:

(1) Describes the number and the nature of complaints received and investigations conducted involving the use of volunteers on public works projects subject to this chapter, that are projects as described in Section 21190 of the Public Resources Code.

(2) Provides an estimate of each of the following as they relate to public works projects that involve the acquisition, presentation, or restoration of natural areas, including parks or ecological reserves, or other public works projects that have one or more of the purposes, as described in Section 21190 of the Public Resources Code:

(A) The number of hours per year that volunteers work on public works projects.

(B) The cost per year of public works projects, that are projects as described in Section 21190 of the Public Resources Code, and the percentage of work performed by volunteers.

(C) The types of work done by volunteers on public works projects, that are projects as described in Section 21190 of the Public Resources Code.

(d) The sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) is hereby appropriated from the Environmental License Plate Fund for the purposes of funding the report required pursuant to subdivision (c).

(e) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2012, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, which is enacted before January 1, 2012, deletes or extends that date.

SEC. 2. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) It is the intent of the Legislature that public works projects should never undermine the wage base in a community.

(b) The Legislature finds that the requirement, that workers on public works projects be paid the prevailing rate of per diem wages, ensures that the local wage base is not lowered.

(c) It is the intent of the Legislature that this act shall not apply to the work of state and local public sector employees.